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ROBERT GREENE'S *WHAT THING IS LOUE?*

In view of the fact that Mr. John Churton Collins in his recent *Plays and Poems of Robert Greene* has said nothing of the poem *What thing is Loue?* (except to refer the reader to Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, 129), I wish to point out the somewhat interesting history of the poem.

It first appeared in Greene's *Menaphon* (1589) as follows:<sup>1</sup>

What thing is Loue? It is a power diuine  
That raines in vs: or else a wreakefull law  
That doomes our mindes, to beautie to encline:  
It is a starre, whose influence dooth draw  
Our heart<sup>2</sup> to Loue dissembling of his might,  
Till he be master of our hearts and sight.

Loue is a discord, and a strange diuorce  
Betwixt our sense and reason, by whose power,  
As madde with reason, we admit that force,  
Which wit or labour neuer may deuoure.

It is a will that brooketh no consent:  
It would refuse, yet neuer may repent.

Loue's a desire, which for to waite a time,  
Dooth loose an age of yeeres, and so doth passe,  
As doth the shadow seuerd from his prime,  
Seeming as though it were, yet never was.

Leauing behinde nought but repentant thoughts  
Of daies ill spent, for that which profits noughts.

Its<sup>3</sup> now a peace, and then a sodaine warre,  
A hope consume before it is conceiue,  
At hand it feares, and menaceth afarre,<sup>4</sup>  
And he that gaines, is most of all deceiue:

It is a secret hidden and not knowne,  
Which one may better feele than write vpon.

The poem next appears in *England's Parnassus*, or *The Choysest Flowers of our Moderne Poets* (1600), p. 172. It had lost the first stanza, had two new lines substituted at the end, and had been otherwise slightly changed. But, most interesting of all, it was attributed to the Earl of Oxford. This attribution seems not to have been questioned since then. In the *Theatrum Poetarum*<sup>5</sup> the poem is given as a specimen of Oxford's verse. Dr. Grosart included it in his collective edition of Oxford's poems.<sup>6</sup> Even Mr.

Sidney Lee, in *The Dictionary of National Biography*, although he refers to the three poems in *England's Parnassus* attributed to Oxford, does not note the mistake. The version of the poem in *England's Parnassus* is as follows:<sup>7</sup>

Loue is a discord and a strange diuorce  
Betwixt our sence and rest, by whose power,  
As mad with reason, we admit that force,  
Which wit or labour neuer may diuorce.

It is a will that brooketh no consent,  
It would refuse, yet neuer may repent.

Loue's a desire, which for to waight a time,  
Dooth loose an age of yeares, and so doth passe,  
As doth the shadow seuerd from his prime,  
Seeming as though it were, yet neuer was.

Leauing behind, nought but repentant thoughts,  
Of dayes ill spent, of that which profits noughts.

It's now a peace, and then a sudden warre,  
A hope, consume before it is conceiue'd;  
At hand it feares, and menaceth afarre,  
And he that gaines, is most of all deceiue'd.

Loue whets the dullest wits, his plagues be such,  
But makes the wise by pleasing, dote as much.

The poem appeared again, in a still further mangled form, in *The Thracian Wonder*. The playwright, of course, borrowed directly from Greene, for he was dramatising the *Menaphon*.<sup>8</sup> This version is as follows:<sup>9</sup>

Love is a law, a discord of such force,  
That 'twixt our sense and reason makes divorce;  
Love's a desire, that to obtain betime,  
We lose an age of years pluck'd from our prime;  
Love is a thing to which we soon consent,  
As soon refuse, but sooner far repent.

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## THE STAGEABILITY OF GARNIER'S TRAGEDIES.

Of all the classic tragedies of the sixteenth century none perhaps seem to us moderns so little adapted to stage representation as those of Garnier. Lanson admits that the poet seems to write for the

<sup>1</sup> I follow the reprints of Arber and of Grosart, which agree throughout. Mr. Collins's version of the poem, though reproducing the same 1589 edition, differs slightly.

<sup>2</sup> "hearts"—Collins.

<sup>3</sup> "Tis"—Collins.

<sup>4</sup> "a farre"—Collins. <sup>5</sup> Edition 1800, p. 88.

<sup>6</sup> *Miscellanies of the Fuller Worthies' Library*, iv.

<sup>7</sup> Since *England's Parnassus* is inaccessible to me, I give the poem as reprinted by Dr. Grosart in *Poems of Edward, Earl of Oxford (Miscellanies of the Fuller Worthies' Library, iv)*, p. 68.

<sup>8</sup> See *Modern Philology*, III, 317.

<sup>9</sup> *The Dramatic Works of John Webster*, ed. by William Hazlitt, iv, 129.

reader only and finds little to warrant us in believing that his tragedies were played to any extent, except possibly *Bradamante*.<sup>1</sup> As for Rigal, he is of course quite convinced that these tragedies were not written for the stage at all and finds some difficulties that hardly exist to prove his point.

The first of the Garnier tragedies is the *Porcie*, published in 1568. The subject of the play is the self-inflicted death of Portia, wife of Brutus, upon learning of the death of her husband on the battlefield. The play is made up of long narratives and monologues and contains little, very little, of dramatic life, but after all, in view of the literary and artistic conditions of the time, that does not justify us in saying that the poet has no care for scenic possibilities.<sup>2</sup> The play is stageable, Rigal's objections to the contrary notwithstanding. One of the two chief difficulties insisted upon by him is the appearance of Antony and his lieutenant along with a chorus of soldiers in the third act before the messenger has had time to relate to Portia the death of Brutus, "Le lieu adâ changer," he says, "nous étions à Rome avec Octavie et les femmes romaines, nous voici près de Philippes avec M. Antoine et ses troupes" (*op. cit.*, p. 27). This amounts almost to a misrepresentation, for the text makes it perfectly clear that this scene is laid in Rome. Antony's first words are :

O Beau seiour natal esmerueillable aux Dieux v. 1013.  
and a little farther on, vv. 1027-1030,

Je reuoy maintenant ma desirable terre.  
Je viens payer les vœux, qu'envelopé de guerre,  
Sous la mercy du sort, ie fis à vos autels,  
Si ie pouuois domter les ennemis mortels.

He is, then, just returning to Rome, and the unity of place is saved. To introduce an act containing these discussions between the forebodings of Portia and their realization is not perhaps according to the highest dramatic economy. But the poet was young ; a tragedy had to have five acts ; Megara's forecast ; Portia's presentiments ; the messenger's story of the death of Brutus, and the nurse's story of the death of Portia furnished material for only four. To have inserted this act of rather irrelevant material anywhere else would have been even

more disastrous ; accordingly the poet put it where it would do the least harm, leaving the spectators as well as his readers to assume, if they chose, that Antony, the soldiers and the messenger came by the same boat, or more likely hoping that the clumsiness of it all would escape their attention—if it did not his own.

The other great difficulty in the way of stage representation, *i. e.*, dramatic probability raised by Rigal, is the alleged discrepancy between the words of the nurse and those of her mistress in the fourth act. In this act the messenger gives a complete account of the battle, the death of Brutus and the bringing back of his body at the command of Antony. Thereupon after a hundred verses or so Portia begins to address her complaints to the body as though it were actually upon the stage, although nothing in the text indicates precisely how or when it got there. But after all this is no great difficulty and the verses even lend themselves to a fairly effective stage-setting. Now in the fifth act when the nurse is relating the occurrences of the fourth to the chorus she says : v. 1880,

Quand ma paure maitresse  
Eut ENTENDU que Brute, auecque la noblesse  
Qui combatoit pour luy d'un si louable cuer,  
Auoit esté desfaict, et qu'Antoine vainqueur  
Lui renuoyoit son corps, qu'à grand' sollicitude  
Il auoit recherché parmi la multitude :  
Après force regrets qu'elle fit sur sa mort,  
Après qu'elle eut long temps ploré son triste sort,  
Retiree en sa chambre, entreprit, demy-morte  
De borner ses langueurs par quelque briefue sorte.

*Note.* Even these last four verses give difficulty to Rigal, although the first two are a perfectly literal and brief description of what happened in the fourth act, and the last two will be supplemented in the narrative which is to follow, v. 1890 ff. In regard to these verses Rigal exclaims triumphantly : "Décidément la nourrice n'a pas vu le corps de Brutus ; elle ne s'est même pas aperçue que sa maitresse fut en proie à une hallucination" (*op. cit.*, p. 26). There is little occasion for such a remark ; the nurse says that Portia had HEARD these things ("eut entendu"), and so she had throughout 146 verses. That Portia's preoccupation is the body of her husband, which she SAW, is quite natural ; that the nurse should be more impressed by the account of the catastrophe which she HEARD rather than with the dead body of Brutus, is also

<sup>1</sup> *Rev. d'Hist. Litt.*, 1903, p. 416.

<sup>2</sup> *Rev. d'Hist. Litt.*, 1904, p. 27.

entirely natural, and there is therefore absolutely no infringement of dramatic probabilities in the passage in question.

*Porcie* could well have been played upon a stage representing the conventional street or open space in front of the palace of Portia, the palace of Octavius, and possibly the senate. Had the poet the proper means at his disposal, and he might hope to have them as we have shown (*The Mise en Scène of the Italians applied to the classic tragedies of the sixteenth century*, p. 8), one extremity of the stage could well have been made to represent the harbor. Here Antony and his soldiers would appear in the third act on their way to the palace of Octavius or the Senate, and in the next act the messenger would be seen passing on his way to tell Portia of her great bereavement.

The text contains at least two indications of the action: one in the second act (v. 465), where the nurse perceives Portia approaching:—

Las ! mais ne voyé-ie pas s'acheminer vers moy  
La fille de Caton regorgeante d'esmoÿ ?

Eight verses later Portia appears. And in the beginning of the last act the nurse calls to the chorus of citizens, v. 1794:—

Accourez Citoyens, accourez, hastez-vous, etc.,

and the chorus of women respond:—

Allons ô troupe aimée, allons voir quel mechef  
Ceste pauvre maison atterre de rechef.

From a modern point of view there can be little question of dramatic effect in this tragedy. The long speeches, some of them without any apparent connection with the action of the play are as undramatic as possible to us, but not necessarily so to the poets and the select audiences of the sixteenth century. Corneille, speaking of the monologue in *Clitandre*, plead in excuse of its length:—"Les monologues sont trop longs et trop fréquents en cette pièce; c'était une beauté en ce temps-là; les comédiens les souhaitaient et croyaient y paraître avec plus d'avantage." In the sixteenth century that was even more true, and not merely the actors, such as there were, but especially the poets, were fond of these monologues and believed—"y paraître avec plus d'avantage."

After the *Porcie* an interval of nearly five years elapses before Garnier produces another play.

This interruption,—due possibly to discouragement, as there is no notice of the representation of the *Porcie*,—is broken in 1573 and 1574 by two plays, the *Hippolyte* and the *Cornélie*. The first of these is composed in close imitation of the *Phedra*, attributed to Seneca, and can hardly be considered playable. In the fifth act, for example, the messenger tells Theseus of the death of his son and urges him to erect a befitting tomb; in the very next scene Phèdre appears addressing complaints to the body of the hero, which is represented as already lying in the tomb. As for the *Cornélie*, while it contains nothing absolutely unstageable, it is composed in a way to make one agree with Rigal that "il n'y a que de la rhétorique ou de la poésie désordonnée et un manque de réalité scénique peu contestable."

Now, after the *Cornélie*, there is another significant pause of about four years before the poet begins a series of plays which appear quite regularly at the rate of about one per annum: *Antoine*, 1579; *Antigone*, 1580; *Bradamante*, 1582; *Les Juives*, probably in 1583.

As for the *Antoine*, Rigal finds in it: "Quelques indications précises" (*op. cit.*, p. 33), but believes that they were such as would have been naturally suggested by Plutarch's life of Antony, which Garnier used as a source (p. 33). This, of course, proves nothing as to the author's intention. Alexandre Hardy, for example, dramatized the Greek romance of Theagenes and Chariclea, as well as sundry other romances ancient and modern, and there can be no doubt that he had the *mise en scène* very much in mind. The *Antoine* could have been played, according to Rigal, on a stage representing the camp of Octavius outside of Alexandria, the palace of Cleopatra and the approaches and interior of the sepulchre, but he believes that such a *mise en scène* was quite beyond the reach of those who prepared the representations of these plays. Now this is again a magnification of the difficulties, for the text nowhere calls for the palace of Cleopatra. In the second act, where the queen and her attendants appear for the first time, the scene is laid before the sepulchre as is clear from her own words, v. 687 f.:

Mais ce pendant entrons en ce sepulcre morne,  
Attendant que la mort mes desplaisances borne.

She appears but once more and that is in the fifth act where, as before, she is in or at the entrance of the tomb, v. 1812 :

Hé puis-je viure encore  
En ce larual sepulchre, où ie me fais enclorre ?

The stage setting thus becomes very simple. Alexandria in the background, before the wall of which would be represented at one end of the stage the camp of Octavius, and on the other the tomb and its approaches.

In the *Troade*, Rigal also finds that the first, third, fourth and fifth acts possess "un incontestable réalité scénique" (*op. cit.*, p. 36 f.). But, alas ! the fourth is entirely out of harmony with the second. Now this is the whole difficulty : In the fourth act a messenger relates to the captive Trojan women the death of Astyanax who, forestalling the action of the Greeks, cast himself down from the lofty tower to which he had been carried. This had taken place before a vast concourse of people, some of whom had sacrilegiously climbed upon Hector's tomb to witness the execution. Now, inasmuch as the deed could be witnessed from Hector's tomb, and inasmuch as the action of the second act was laid before said tomb, Rigal, apparently feeling that Andromaque was bound to remain rooted to the spot during the third act, declares : "Cette fois nous heurtons à une impossibilité évidente." But the scene of the fourth act is laid before the tent of Hecuba (cf. v. 2295 ff.) near the harbor, and Andromaque is there to hear with her mother the death of Astyanax and of Polyxène from the lips of the messenger. One quite naturally supposes that after the wily Ulysses has succeeded in wringing from the unhappy mother the secret of her son's concealment in his father's tomb she has come away ; she has left the tomb of her husband and come to her mother's tent as was eminently natural. Accordingly she did *not* see the immolation of her son and there is no contradiction, no "impossibilité scénique" whatever.

(*Note.* The rather abrupt change of scene in the third act, while abrupt, is quite within stage conventions. Pyrrhus uses five verses to stir up the zeal of his followers as they march from the camp of Agamemnon to the tent of Hecuba in order to seek for Polyxène. Plenty of examples could be found in support of such procedure.)

As for the *Antigone* (1580), Rigal admits that if : "On voulait mettre en scène Antigone sur un théâtre disposé comme celui de Hardy, on y arriverait sans difficulté sérieuse" (*op. cit.*, p. 41). He believes, however, that it is to be looked upon merely as "un pur exercice d'humaniste" (45).

The *Bradamante* is known to have been played, and in it Garnier seems to show some preoccupation for the *mise en scène* as has generally been recognized (cf. Rigal, *op. cit.*, p. 46 ; Lanson, *op. cit.*, p. 416).

And this brings us to *Les Juives*, the last of Garnier's tragedies and generally considered to be the best. Rigal admits in this play that the poet : "ne manquait pas d'imagination visuelle et se figurait assez souvent les personnages qu'il faisait parler" ; still he thinks that this tragedy : "n'était pas encore pour lui une œuvre de théâtre vivant d'une vie nette dans un milieu scénique bien déterminé" (*op. cit.*, p. 209). To prove this Rigal finds a great many difficulties in the way of stage presentation which seem to me entirely imaginary.

The stage would represent three general divisions. One side the fields where the women and children are kept captive ; the center the palace, or the entrance to the palace, of Nebuchadnezzar ; the other end of the stage the prisons, where are confined Zedekiah the pontiff, and perhaps other male prisoners. The places occupied by the captives are quite clearly defined in the text. Halmutal says, addressing the chorus of Jewish women, "Pleurons donques, pleurons sur ces molteuses riues" (v. 359) ; as the queen of Assyria comes towards them she speaks of the surroundings as "Ces belles campagnes" (v. 571) ; obviously the fields along the banks of the Euphrates. Zedekiah describes his place of imprisonment in these terms, v. 1283 f. :

Voyez comme enchaisnez en des prisons obscures,  
Nous souffrons iour et nuit de cruelles tortures,  
Comme on nous tient en serre estroittement liez,  
Le col en vne chaisne, et les bras et les pieds.

It is in these places that the second and third scenes of the second act, and the whole of acts four and five are laid. The first act might from its character take place anywhere and the rest of the play would be represented before the king of Assyria.

At the end of the fourth act Nebuchadnezzar visits Zedekiah in prison and at the end of a violent scene bursts into a passion and exclaims to his attendants, "Empoignez-le, Soudars, et le tirez d'ici," v. 1497. Zedekiah defies him to do his worst and is rewarded with the promise of an exemplary punishment. Rigal makes a great difficulty of this. "Pourquoi tirerait-on Sédécie hors de sa prison?" (*op. cit.*, p. 207), "pourquoi veut-il qu'on les amène et qu'on les atratne jusqu'à lui puisqu'ils sont enchaînés à ses pieds." But this is made perfectly clear with the opening of the next scene in which the Prevost informs us that Zedekiah has been taken from his prison in order that he be forced to see his sons put to death before his eyes. The presence of the chorus after Zedekiah has been removed from the prison is also a source of great trouble to Rigal, for how could these Jewish women be in the prison and not know what had happened? As a matter of fact, there is nothing in the chorus referring to the Jewish king, but there is, as if to remind us of the locality, another reference to those shores of the Euphrates where the chorus will end its life sighing in captivity. (Cf. v. 1557 ff.) There would certainly be no great strain of the conventions at this point, and the whole passage, far from being confused as Rigal represents, is, on the contrary, quite clear, and the stage picture is not difficult to form. As for the objection that different characters recite from twenty to thirty verses on the stage before their presence is perceived or before they perceive the presence of others; that is a common practice of modern dramatists, and a convention no more abused by Garnier than it is, for example, by Molière.

*Les Juives* is a tragedy full of life and action. There is doubtless too much action, but every verse of it could have been acted on a stage such as we have described and acted effectively, too, without any great violence to the conventions as then understood. As far as the play itself is concerned, there is no reason why we must look upon it as a "déclamation dramatique et dialoguée." And likewise to a greater or less extent are all of the tragedies of Garnier playable, or were playable, with the probable exception of *Hippolyte* and *Cornélie*, which stand somewhat apart from the others in time as well as in character.

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## SPANISH LITERATURE.

*Primera Crónica General ó sea Estoria de España que mandó componer Alfonso el Sabio y se continuaba bajo Sancho IV en 1289*; publicada por RAMÓN MENÉNDEZ PIDAL. Tomo I—Texto. Madrid: Bailly Baillière é Hijos, 1906. 8vo., iv + 776 pp.

This volume, which forms number five of the *Nueva Biblioteca de Autores Españoles*, is noteworthy in two respects; namely, for the great historical, literary and linguistic value of the text it contains, and for the fact that the editor is the one man pre-eminently fitted for the difficult task of editing the text in question. With the publication of his *Leyenda de los Infantes de Lara* in 1896, the name of Menéndez Pidal became indelibly associated with the old Spanish Chronicles. Since the year 1896 Pidal has published many further studies dealing, directly or indirectly, with the *Crónica General* and the scope of these studies may be illustrated by mentioning his *Crónicas Generales de España* and *El Poema del Cid y las Crónicas Generales de España*, both of which appeared in the year 1898; and the *Aluacaxi y la elegía árabe de Valencia* which was published in 1904.

As an historical document the *Primera Crónica General* is the first real history of Spain in the vernacular, being the legitimate successor of the earlier *Anales* and the Latin histories of Rodrigo de Toledo and Lucas de Luy. As a literary monument it is one of the earliest specimens of Spanish prose, and the varied subject matter, the dignity of style, the richness of vocabulary and idiom, make it of inestimable value for the study of the beginnings of Spanish literature. The literary value of the *Crónica General* is especially in evidence when we consider that the remaining prose works written or inspired by Alfonso the Wise, are primarily technical in character; for example, his works on astronomy, his treatise on chess, dice and checkers, his legal codes and single laws, to say nothing of the fragmentary *Septenario*. Furthermore, the specific relation between the *Crónica General* and Spanish epic poetry is most important. Copying as it did the earlier epic poems and forming a primary source for later epic ballads, the relation of Alfonso's *Chronicle* to the various phases of epic poetry can now be studied with the care and detail that were impossible heretofore.

The earliest printed text of the *Crónica General* was published by Florian de Ocampo, Zamora, 1541, and reprinted in Valladolid, 1604; since then the *Crónica* has not been reprinted or edited. Not long after the appearance of the 1541 edition, Jerónimo Zurita discovered that Ocampo's version seemed to be replete with most